Telangana Kala Parishath

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To
The Chairperson,
Justice K.G. Balakrishnan Commission,
Government of India, New Delhi – India

Date: 26 May, 2026

Respected Sir,

Subject: Representation for Granting Scheduled Caste (SC) Status to Dalit Christians in India – A Plea for Constitutional Justice, Equality, Human Dignity, and Social Equity

I write this representation with deep concern and constitutional conviction regarding the continued exclusion of Dalit Christians from Scheduled Caste (SC) status under Paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. This issue concerns not merely policy or reservation, but the larger question of justice, equality, dignity, and the moral responsibility of a democratic republic towards historically oppressed communities. India's Constitution was envisioned as a transformative instrument to dismantle centuries of social exclusion, caste oppression, and untouchability. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the framers of the Constitution sought to establish a society based on liberty, equality, fraternity, and social justice. However, the continued denial of Scheduled Caste status to Dalit Christians creates a religion-based barrier to constitutional protections and perpetuates historical discrimination against marginalized communities.

The exclusion of Dalit Christians from SC benefits under the 1950 Presidential Order is inconsistent with Articles 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, and 25 of the Constitution of India. It creates an arbitrary classification wherein persons suffering from the same caste-based discrimination are treated differently solely because of their religious faith. Such exclusion undermines the secular and egalitarian spirit of the Constitution.

Historically, many Dalits converted to Christianity seeking dignity, social equality, education, and liberation from untouchability practices. However, conversion did not erase caste identity from the Indian social structure. Across villages, towns, institutions, and even social interactions, Dalit Christians continue to face discrimination based on their caste origins. Their lived reality demonstrates that caste in India is not merely a theological issue but a deeply embedded socio-cultural and economic structure that transcends religion.

Numerous sociological studies and field reports reveal that Dalit Christians continue to experience segregation in burial grounds, exclusion in marriage alliances, discrimination in housing and employment, social boycotts, and unequal treatment within religious institutions and society at large. In many parts of India, separate churches, cemeteries, seating arrangements, and social hierarchies continue to exist. Thus, the assumption that conversion automatically eliminates caste-based discrimination has been disproven repeatedly by empirical evidence. The Government of India itself has recognized that caste can continue beyond Hinduism through earlier amendments extending Scheduled Caste status to Sikhs in 1956 and Buddhists in 1990. If caste-based oppression persists among these communities, there exists no rational or constitutional basis to deny similar recognition to Dalit Christians who face comparable forms of social and economic marginalization.

The Ranganath Misra Commission (National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, 2007) made a historic recommendation to completely delink Scheduled Caste status from religion by deleting Paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. The Commission concluded that the exclusion of Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims amounts to religion-based discrimination and violates constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination.

Several academic studies, including research conducted for the National Commission for Minorities and independent sociological investigations, have demonstrated that Dalit Christians continue to suffer severe poverty, educational backwardness, landlessness, unemployment, and social exclusion. Large sections remain concentrated in low-paying and stigmatized occupations such as sanitation work, agricultural labor, and informal employment. Health, literacy, and economic indicators among Dalit Christians remain deeply alarming and comparable to other Scheduled Castes. Further, international human rights institutions and United Nations bodies have repeatedly expressed concern regarding caste-based discrimination affecting marginalized religious minorities in India. As a signatory to various international human rights conventions, India carries both a constitutional and moral responsibility to ensure equal protection and dignity for all citizens irrespective of religion.

The continued exclusion of Dalit Christians also creates a painful and unjust dilemma wherein oppressed individuals are effectively forced to choose between freedom of religion and access to constitutional safeguards. No democratic nation committed to secularism and equality should place its citizens in such a position. Some objections are often raised that Christianity, as a religion, does not recognize caste. While this may be true doctrinally, public policy must be based on social realities rather than theological ideals. The Indian social structure continues to identify and discriminate against individuals on the basis of caste origins irrespective of religious conversion. Therefore, the denial of SC status cannot be justified on purely religious assumptions detached from lived experiences.

Administrative feasibility is also not an insurmountable challenge. Existing systems used for identifying Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and state-level classifications already demonstrate that mechanisms of verification and identification can be effectively implemented.

In light of the above facts, constitutional principles, commission reports, empirical evidence, and humanitarian considerations, I humbly request the Government of India and all concerned authorities to consider the following:

1. Immediate deletion of Paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, thereby delinking Scheduled Caste status from religion.
2. Extension of full Scheduled Caste benefits to Dalit Christians, including reservations in education, public employment, political representation, scholarships, welfare schemes, and protection under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.
3. Expeditious completion, publication, and implementation of recommendations by the Justice K.G. Balakrishnan Commission.
4. Collection of accurate caste-based socio-economic data concerning Dalit Christians in future censuses and national surveys to enable evidence-based policymaking.
5. Establishment of safeguards and monitoring mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of welfare measures for marginalized converted communities.
6. Wider consultations with scholars, social justice activists, church representatives, constitutional experts, human rights bodies, and affected communities before final policy decisions.

Granting Scheduled Caste status to Dalit Christians is not a matter of privilege; it is a matter of restoring constitutional equality, correcting historical injustice, and affirming the dignity of millions who continue to suffer caste-based discrimination despite conversion. A truly democratic and secular India must recognize social realities over religious technicalities and uphold justice without discrimination.

India's strength lies in its constitutional morality, pluralism, and commitment to social justice. The soul of democracy is measured not by the power of the privileged but by the protection extended to the marginalized.

I sincerely hope that the Government of India and all concerned constitutional authorities will take compassionate, rational, and justice-oriented action on this historic issue in the larger national interest and in the spirit of constitutional equality. Thanking you.

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